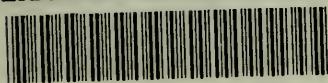


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BISMARCK VS. PETER,

OR THE

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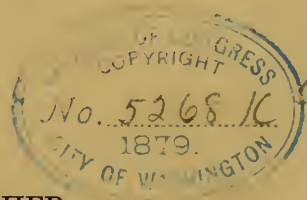
CATHOLIC CHURCH

17
1457
IN PRUSSIA.

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By M. SULLIVAN.

BISMARCK *versus* PETER;

OR,

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRUSSIAN "KULTURKAMPF."*

BEING unable to forecast the future, and not knowing what changes in the politico-religious world a day may develop, the writer thinks it well to state that he commences to pen the following reflections on the first day of August (1878), the feast of St. Peter-in-Chains. The news at this date is that the Papal Nuncio at Munich, in obedience to instructions from His Holiness, Leo XIII., has gone to Kissingen, and been received there by Prince Bismarck. In breathless expectancy the whole Catholic world watches for the result of this mission. Its object is, of course, nothing more nor less than the Kulturkampf,—that Kulturkampf denounced by every practical Catholic throughout the world, and latterly, openly and solemnly decried by very many who are not Catholics, as the most deplorable event of our times. Many of our keenest observers, as well as the healthy instinct of the common people, ascribe to no other cause those calamities that have latterly befallen the Fatherland, and which so menacingly threaten its future. For these reasons all eyes are now naturally bent on Kissingen; some only with fear and anxiety,

* This word Kulturkampf is used to designate the persecution of the Catholic Church in Prussia.

others with courage and trust in God; the former dreading lest Kissingen should turn out another Canossa, the latter hoping that it may prove so; the one party desiring that at Kissingen the axe may at last be laid to the root of the tree, and that truth, right and freedom be banished from the land; the other hopeful, but not without anxiety, lest at Kissingen a disgraceful compact be entered into, and principles be sacrificed to expediency. The true Catholic, while turning his eyes toward Kissingen, lifts up his heart to heaven; he prays, and is tranquil. This is our attitude. With calm confidence we are waiting to see what it may please the Holy Ghost to do for his Church, the Spouse of Christ, and for the peace and salvation of mankind. Meantime we shall glance at the history, thus far, of the infamous Kulturkampf, and express our conclusions thereon.

God's ways are wonderful and always noteworthy:—a truth, perhaps, in nowise more apparent than in the fact that He suffers things to happen which are not according to His will. All history is a grand triumphant *Te Deum* to God's Providence, which is best displayed when He turns, as He invariably does, the acts and machinations of persecutors, intended for the ruin, to the exaltation of His Church. Error and vice must in the end conduce to His glory, as well as truth and virtue. And even so has the Kulturkampf, intended by its promoters to annihilate the Catholic Church, not only not done so, but, to the astonishment of the world, actually served to strengthen the Church and advance the cause of Christianity. It is of course to be lamented that this strife caused so many sorrows, called forth so many tears, and gave rise to so many misfortunes. To those things we do not shut our eyes. But, on the other hand, we must bear in mind that the Lord rules and directs all things, and that out of these very calamities which, by the misuse of man's free will, He permits, nay, so to say,

must permit, to come upon His Church, He will eventually bring forth the richest blessings, both for the Church and society. And though we cannot as yet take in the full dimensions of the benefits designed by God to flow from the Kulturkampf, yet even those already opened to view are such, and so many, that, in a certain sense, one may well exclaim: What a pity if this Kulturkampf had not come! We shall here record a few.

I. In conversation with a farmer not long since, who is a keen observer and a strong ultramontane, he surprised us by remarking: "The closer I look into the matter, the more evident becomes the fact that it was precisely in those parishes now suppressed, that the pastors, from time out of mind, had most trouble with, and least regard from, the parishioners." He cited a great many instances in support of his allegation, so many, indeed, as to leave no doubt of its general correctness. That striking remark of the rustic philosopher led to the following considerations.

It cannot be denied that, for several years back, the Catholic populations of the several parishes were far from treating their pastors with becoming reverence and respect. There were many parishes in which no pastor could make himself acceptable to the people. Change after change of pastors was made, but the result was always the same. The parishioners continued to harp and carp at every one in succession. Even the most holy and zealous men could not conciliate favor. Every act of the pastor was made the subject of cavil and comment; and this fault-finding was indulged in everywhere, and on all occasions, as well in the public tavern as in the family circle in the presence of children and servants. With one pastor it was that he took sides too strongly in this or that village quarrel; another was too obsequious to the wealthy, while harsh to the poor; another was too fond of money; a third, too long in his sermons; a fourth, too hasty in the confessional; a fifth,

never on time; a sixth, neglectful of the sick; a seventh, too very pointed in his discourses; an eighth, altogether too heedless, &c., &c. Sunday afternoons, the morning's sermon was the regular topic of conversation, both in the tavern and at the tea-table. We need not say that the subject would be discussed in any but a complimentary manner to the poor pastor. One Solon would state oracularly that the discourse did not properly hang on the text at all, that in fact he was sick of listening to such disjointed sermons, and made up his mind not to go any more. Aunt Bessie, a venerable spinster, would assent to the foregoing, most decidedly, adding, "There was no bearing with such dry preaching. Then the language! it was so coarse and vulgar, the expressions so severe, the examples so ridiculous." Aunt Fanny would chime in: "It is, indeed, a misfortune for a parish to have such a man for pastor." And still another adds: "The man has no grace of delivery whatever, and besides, I don't believe he prepares his sermons sufficiently." Here young Fanny, just home from boarding-school, gets in her word: Fanny's judgment of the matter being that the whole trouble with the pastor arises from the fact, that he neglects to read the literature of the day. "Just think of his style! He cannot be a well-read man, and is altogether unfit for this congregation."

This was the kind of treatment that the successors of the apostles received in many places at the hands of those for whose salvation they labored and prayed, and endured privations. To the influence of secret societies was undoubtedly to be attributed that chronic fault-finding of Catholics with their pastors. That baleful influence is installed as a power in nearly every parish, city or country throughout the land. It is fostered by the press, by government functionaries, by Jews and free-thinkers. The earliest effect of secret societies is to arouse in men's hearts longings and aspirations to which people of their

condition in life were formerly strangers. As a result, many a farm-hand conceived a foolish envy of his village pastor, for no other reason than that the latter's circumstances in life were better than his own. Puffed up by the societies, many a young fellow was often mortified to find in the pastor one who could show up his silly liberalism. His discomfiture invariably soured himself and was sure to exasperate the local heads of the society, who were generally the village officials, appointees of the government. Many a bad young man and many a lecherous old scoundrel did it often to vex the soul to see that "that Jack of a Priest" should exercise such influence over the young women of the parish. Small wonder if the pastor in many places was the most vilely abused and most bitterly hated person in the neighborhood. The cant and sayings of the clubs gradually spread among the people, and infected the minds of the simple. Not unfrequently would one hear from the lips of a cow-boy some such remark as this: "Pshah! preaching! that is how these gents earn their living. Stop the pay, and they'll soon shut up." A significant by-word obtained currency among the country people to the effect, that one is never obliged to restore stolen goods either to Jews or priests; because the former had never come honestly by them, and the latter have no need of anything. The irony is obvious.

Now, thanks to the Kulturkampf, all this carping and fault-finding with the pastor has disappeared from Catholic congregations. Common suffering has brought priest and people into closer sympathy with each other. The clergy are a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. Heroically and steadfastly they stick to the standard of the Church, in spite of poverty and obloquy, in spite of banishment and imprisonment. They faithfully obey the instructions of their bishops, the mandates of the Holy Father. They are on every hand a noble and inspiring

example to the faithful. Against such men calumny is vain. The shafts of the free-thinkers are blunted; and there has arisen among the Catholics a sentiment of love and veneration for their pastors, whose strong fidelity and sterling worth they have at last come to recognize.

Again, by the suppression of the parish, that is, by the refusal of the State to recognize the unsubmitting pastor, the maintenance of the priest necessarily devolved on the parishioners. Envy, if it anywhere existed, was banished by the voluntary offering. And now the parishioners naturally came to feel a personal interest in the pastor; he was theirs, and none others, and they felt a species of right that he should not be taken away from them. At the same time they were mindful that, if the one they had should go, they could not obtain another. The priest's worth was enhanced in the eyes of every man who contributed a dollar toward his support. What nothing costs is nothing worth, says the proverb. Each dollar given made the pastor and religion a dollar the more precious in the estimation of the giver.

As in each district one parish after another was bereft of its priest, whether by death, exile, or imprisonment, the people began to appreciate what a blessing it is for each village to have its own regular and abiding pastor. Instead of a few minutes' walk to their own parish church, they were now obliged to travel miles, in all weather, to hear Mass on Sunday. It was the same in case of sickness. A messenger had to go off miles to fetch the pastor of some other village. It now came home to many how sinful had been the neglect of their religious duties all those years when they had the parish church at the door. Many a sigh of regret was awakened in people who found themselves now obliged to trudge miles to a priest, as they bethought them of the disrespect shown formerly to their pastor, their slander and fault-finding, their story-carrying

and mischief-making, in order to thwart and worry him. And those parishes that still have a priest! One should compare a dozen years ago with to-day, to realize the great change that has taken place. In private and family devotions there is always a prayer for the pastor, that his health may continue, and his days be prolonged to minister to his people. They salute him respectfully and affectionately; they take sides with him on all occasions; they open their hearts to him and gratefully accept his advice; and this blessing of having their pastor amongst them they appreciate all the more, from witnessing the heart-scald of their neighbors, who have to come from various distances to seek his services. The relations between the pastor and his flock are now as edifying and consoling as they were, some few years ago, scandalous and distressing. No mission ever wrought such a change. God himself took the matter in hands, and this great change, among others of his holy purposes, He effected through the *Kulturkampf*. For, when a congregation come to love and esteem their pastor, and prize their church and religious duties, all is gained. Priest and people, sheep and shepherd, have been drawn closer in love and union by the very means intended to effect the contrary. Such is God's way.

We may add as another gain through the *Kulturkampf*, the increased reverence of the people for their bishops, and the astonishing growth of a devotion, almost personal in its character, to the Holy Father. During some years past, the pope and bishops were singled out, in a particular manner, for abuse and defamation, by the agencies of the secret societies. This abuse, heaped so malignantly on them, only served to arouse the sympathies of the entire Catholic world in their behalf, as well as the indignant protest of very many enlightened and unprejudiced non-Catholics. The vain efforts of their enemies only served to lift the Pope and bishops more prominently, if possible, into view, and to

press most effectually upon the attention of all enlightened minds the fundamental question: Where is the true Church of Christ? The world was forced to see in what church sacrifices were made, and sufferings endured. These give testimony to the truth. And when was the entire Catholic world ever before stirred up to such zeal and devotion to the Holy See, as it has been within the last few years? That heart-felt reverence, and strong enthusiasm which swept all before it, and electrified the whole Catholic population in favor of Clement Augustus, in 1837,—is not all that renewed in our own day, as many times as our bishops have to suffer in this Kulturkampf? To-day we have many heroes treading in the footsteps of Clement Augustus, and every one of them inspires as much love, loyalty, and enthusiasm, as he did. As a matter of fact, thousands of honest and clear-sighted men, belonging to other denominations, openly admire and warmly applaud the Catholic clergy, from the Pope down to the most obscure chaplain, for their unwavering steadfastness. Nor is the world's praise less compelled by the Catholic laity, who have, throughout all, stood like a rock by their faithful pastors. When did any of the sects exhibit such a spectacle? And this spectacle is all the more impressive, from the fact that the results achieved surpass all hopes and calculations. We can only touch on matters, and barely call attention to events and phenomena in the region of Protestantism since the Kulturkampf began. It will be quite enough. Now, does any one believe that there are not many Protestants who have an eye on such conventions as that between Rome and Wittenberg, as that convention is now known to us, and who do not form their ideas and conclusions accordingly? We are far from the end yet. The seed has only been sown, the crop is to come. There is not a single act of those many, termed the May-laws, that have been rushed through the Reichstag

with such fever heat, and as quickly put into execution, that is not laden with its freight of inevitable consequences for the future. Every despoiled or banished Stephen, will convert a Saul into a Paul. The storm is now raging. 'Tis only bye and bye we shall be able to trace out its effects. Meanwhile we can do no better than wish the Church joy of the Kulturkampf.

II. Goldsmiths use a strong acid, called aqua-fortis, to discover the genuine metal from the spurious. Applied to the pure gold, the aqua-fortis leaves the metal unstained, or only brighter; applied to the sham, the metal betrays its baseness instantly, becoming black and ugly. Now the Kulturkampf has been thus operating amongst men, and must continue so to operate, and perhaps in this lies its deepest significance and most salutary effect. Nothing less violent would drag all that was "rotten in Denmark" to light. No gilding, no polish, can resist that test. It probes to the bottom. By it was discovered what rottenness lay just beneath the surface in many of our professors. But for the Kulturkampf, how many a cloaked wolf would be as yet going on from year to year, instilling infidelity into the minds of our young men. The Kulturkampf tore off the disguise, and revealed them to the world in their true light. How our age was surprised when the aqua-fortis began to work upon this and that very learned and highly respectable professor, and discovered him to be a renegade! Ejected poison can do no more hurt. But as long as the virus remains in the system, it goes on poisoning the blood, and doing its deadly work. It was only by the pap of state-favor, that these serpents were enticed from their hiding holes in the body of the Church, and the filthy hypocrisy of their whilom existence revealed.

The aqua-fortis was also applied to the clergy, to those who were in care of souls, as well as to those who were employed in the civil or ecclesiastical administration.

God be praised, only a wretched few were found to be State-priests. But still, even that few were far too many, to leave lurking in private, and effecting still further ruin in their disguise. They are now known, known to the Pope, to their bishops, to their fellow-clergymen, and to the people. All know what may be expected of these gentlemen, who, in opposition to the Candidates of the Center, used to declare in favor of the nominees of "Liberalism," Free-masonry and Infidelity for the Reichstag or Landtag. We know now what manner of men those clerics were who advocated the May-laws, as against Ultramontan-ism, and who issued pamphlets decrying the "opposition of the bishops,"—men whose best eloquence is over the wine-cup. We know the gentlemen who pocketed certain moneys to the scandal of the faithful, and were trying to carry two faces. We have also learned to appreciate the gentlemen, who, without leave of their ecclesiastical superiors, threw up their charges, to accept promotion, in the shape of a fat living from the State. It is very easy, indeed, for the Church to put up with the loss of this handful of worthies. But it is of incalculable advantage to have them thus found out. Still, without the aqua-fortis, it would be very difficult to discover them; so we must thank the Kultur-kampf again for this most signal service rendered to the Church. In the hands of God, it has become a real blessing to the Church and to the people.

Among the laity this aqua-fortis has also done good work. Through its operation thoughts out of many hearts have been revealed. Many a prophet's mantle has been torn off, many a shining light has dimmed. As soon as it became necessary to profess their religion and make any sacrifice, then were the changelings recognized, then did the traitors throw aside their disguise. Men who had passed for pious, for men of principle;—alas! they were found to have been hypocrites and double-dealers. Many

who, in quiet times, passed as strong Ultramontanes, were the first to fling out the parliamentary banner with the pseudo motto, "Neutrality," inscribed on its folds. Catholic officials, who had been regarded as models of faith and piety, expressed themselves openly in favor of State supremacy in Spirituals. The aqua-fortis worked to a charm. Not in one or two places, but all over the country it plainly distinguished the sterling Catholicity from the spurious article. Never were so many cases presented to that faculty by which we read men's characters, whereon to exercise its acumen. A great deal of experience was gained in a short time, and not a tittle of that experience but will be brought some day into service for the public good. Evidence and truth are always serviceable, and the day will come when both in Church and State the fullest and freest use will be made of the experience gained by the aqua-fortis of the Kulturkampf. It has disclosed to us the men who sham religion, and distinguished them from the men of conviction and principle.

The importance of the knowledge thus afforded us cannot, indeed, be overrated in the domain of education. Gods! what a swarm of knaves were among the school-teachers! How many a poor wretch, who formerly brushed the pastor's coat, or the clerical school-inspector's, burst into a patriot when the troubles commenced, denounced the priest, denounced his benefactors, and clutched eagerly at the few pennies thrown him for his treason. By and by, when a change takes place, those patriots will be kept in sight, and will be told what kind of men ought not to be entrusted with the education of children. These gentlemen have pronounced judgment on themselves. For this, too, we are indebted solely to the Kulturkampf. Pity if it had not come.

III Another good office of the Kulturkampf was to show us how people are disposed toward us, and what they have

against us. For years there was felt a something, as it were, in the air, which betokened trouble to the Church. The so-called Liberal party, urged on by the lodges and secret societies, have been untiring in their efforts, both through press and lecture-hall, and every manner of means, to make effective their hatred of Catholicity, and to injure its interests. At the same time there were among ourselves too many careless and easy-going people, who would not read the signs of the times, and who laughed down, as a croaker and an old woman, any one who ventured to raise a cry of warning. Of a sudden the bomb exploded. To our consternation we beheld all parties banded together to devise exceptional laws against the Catholics. History was ransacked to furnish models. The masks were laid aside; the aim of those laws openly announced: the programme of masonic liberalism was made public; Catholics must be denied all political rights or recognition, as such, denied fire and water, and put into political straight-jackets. Law after law was hurriedly enacted, and at once savagely enforced. And this, at least, was fortunate, fortunate that the cloven foot was thrust into view at once. In presence of the bare facts all doubts as to the intentions of the government were dispelled: Catholicity in Germany was to be destroyed, root and branch. But, strange perversity! in the face of threatening and danger the Catholics did not budge; they stuck stubbornly by their faith. It was evident that the first bomb failed of effect. This steadfastness of the Catholics was set down as stupidity. But the authors of the *Kulturkampf* were not to be so baffled. The measures already taken were not convincing enough. The school-birch was exchanged for the bludgeon, and blows were rained quick, thick and heavy on the Catholics, to convince the numbskulls that it was no tickling game was meant. In spite of all this, is it not provoking to hear a Catholic here and there, even to this day, argue that the

Liberal party never aimed at the uprooting of the Catholic Church in Germany, but only took what action seemed to them necessary to guard the constitution and civil liberty against the encroachments of the Roman hierarchy? Well, notwithstanding all that we have witnessed, it may be that there are some Catholics who honestly credit such humbug. The Liberals nickname us the "Blockheads," and it would seem not entirely without reason. Heedless in regard to public affairs, and naturally unsuspicious, the Catholics could be aroused only by some such rough usage as they had, quick and sudden, in this Kulturkampf. Had it come in any milder form, to this hour most of our people would insist that the Liberals are only caressing us. All thanks then to the bludgeon, and the good hard knocks that serried our ranks and brought Catholics to their senses.

It is the Prussian government, not Germany nor the German people, that got up the Kulturkampf. It may be asked, What object can Prussia have,—what motive, for this hostility to Rome? History must be questioned for the answer. Opposition to Rome is an old heirloom of the Prussian monarchy. It was always acted upon by Prussia, both in her foreign diplomacy and home policy. It was plainly alluded to, or quietly taken for granted, in many recent political transactions. The outburst of the Kulturkampf, therefore, did not throw Prussia into any uneasy or unnatural attitude. By no means. As hailed by a contemporary, the Kulturkampf is that "rare and rollicking war on Rome," so refreshing to the Prussian government. We need here only mention that phrase "Prussian traditions," which has latterly come into such vogue, and is dwelt upon in certain quarters with such manifest delight. History informs us that these "Prussian traditions" simply mean Prussia's unceasing efforts at self-aggrandizement, and her unscrupulousness as to the means she will employ toward gaining the desired end. It is needless to remind the present generation that those "Prus-

sian traditions" are not dead yet. The relations that have always existed between Prussia and the Catholic Church, between Prussia and her Catholic subjects, are known to every student of history. On this subject we need say no more; but, while on the special subject of Prussia's government, there is one thing for which we may devoutly thank Heaven and Prince Bismarck, namely, that the Kulturkampf here is not carried on after any Russian fashion, but after a genuine, original, Prussian invention. The dash for victory is made with the proverbial silly celerity of our people, that celerity with which they rushed on Bohemia in 1866 and Alsace in 1870. The slow gait of the Muscovite in the matter of a Kulturkampf is regarded in Prussia as only delicate trifling,—dull, tedious, inglorious. A glance at Russian Poland constrains us, happy Prussians, to lift up our hands in thanksgiving that matters are not so dragged along in our country. Nor is that all we ought to be thankful for. Unlike Russia's system, the Prussian Kulterkampf is so directed as not to make enemies, by fines, exile, imprisonment, and the like, but rather friends by conferring title, office, and position. Would it not have been more effectual for the "Prussian traditions" if the soft glove had been drawn on, and fair words and cajoling tried on us? That this latter course of action was not deemed advisable in the secret conventicles, is the greatest, if not the only boon, which Protestant Prussia ever granted to the Catholic Church. We are fully sensible of the favor, and duly thankful for the same. Heaven only grant that Prince Bismarck, taught by experience, may not even yet draw that soft hand of his out of his pocket to stroke us fondly down. We are used to the man of iron and his iron ways, but we should be in real terror, were he to approach us with bland smile and kindly language.

IV. But there is still more to be told of the good effects of the Kulturkampf. By the mercy of God it has been the means

of infusing new zeal and life into the souls of many Catholics, who had either fallen away entirely from their Church, or grown remiss in the performance of their religious duties. We are safe in asserting that there is scarcely a single Catholic congregation that cannot to-day point to one or more individuals, to one or more families, brought back to the Church and their duties by the Kulturkampf. The virulent May-laws aroused the indignation of these nominal Catholics, and nettled them into opposition. The piety and training of their earlier days were recalled to memory, the lethargy of years was shaken off, and they returned humble penitents to their Church, and the practice of their holy religion. A vast number of such are now seen regularly at Mass and regularly approaching the sacraments. We find them joining and organizing Catholic societies, and using their influence to secure the election of acceptable candidates to the Reichstag. Perhaps nothing served so effectually to fire up these lukewarm Catholics as to witness the savage treatment meted out by the government to men who had fought like lions on the fields of Bohemia and France for Fatherland. We may also well believe that the sacrifices and sufferings of the Church drew down an increase of grace on her sinful and erring children. It is a consoling fact that there are thousands now bravely taking their places in the van of the Catholic party, and ready to lay down their lives for their faith, who, a few years ago, were entirely estranged from the Church, and had lost all but the name of Catholics.

But it was those Catholics who never deserted their Church that derived the most spiritual benefit from the Kulturkampf. From its earliest commencement they judged, and judged rightly, that the movement was intended to rob them of their faith. This made them only attach themselves the more fondly and strongly to that faith, and more earnest in their religious duties. They no longer complained of the distance

to church; they contributed freely and generously to the support of the priest; they subscribed to Catholic papers; they got up political clubs, organized Catholic societies, and marched in a body to the ballot-box on election day; they signed protests against the schools and against the books, and questioned their children closely as to all that transpired during school hours; parents taught the Catechism at home and introduced family prayers; in short, a complete and blessed change has taken place both in the family and in the several congregations since those May-laws came into operation. The evidence of all this makes some good priests of Austria and Hungary jocularly remark that, until they get a Bismarck, there is no hope of arousing their people to a religious life. In truth, we are forcibly reminded, by what we see now going on in Prussia, of that strong Christian spirit of the first centuries, or the best days of the Middle Ages. The spirit of faith, the spirit of the martyrs, that noble spirit of self-sacrifice so conspicuous in the Ages of Faith, has again returned to the earth. Such an outcome of the affair was little expected by the promoters of the Kulturkampf. They are trying the Catholics in the furnace, but only to see them come out hardened into steel.

It is wonderful to note how keenly watched is every circumstance bearing on the religious question, and with what falcon eyes the people detect every move in the politico-religious field. If a clergyman be found accepting the State allowance, if there be the least sign of a good understanding between a priest and the government functionaries, he is forthwith denounced and accused by the congregation; no one goes near him, none listen to his preaching, none have recourse to his confessional, hear his Mass, or accept any ministerial service at his hands. It is long, if ever, indeed, since the Church witnessed such heroic fidelity.

Rome was never so dear to the heart of Catholic Germany

as it is to-day. Never before did the hearts of German Catholics throb so warmly toward the Holy Father; never were Roman and Papal festivals and anniversaries celebrated with such pomp and joy as they are in these later years.

The Kulturkampf has concentrated against the government an opposition on the part of Catholics such as nothing else could—an opposition deeply seated, keen and unyielding, and yet, in every respect, irreproachable, noble, peaceful, and respectable. If the Prussians wish to lose that modicum of confidence which heretofore they have enjoyed from their Catholic constituents, to lose it at once and forever, they have only to go on with the Kulturkampf. The Catholics will continue paying their taxes as usual; they will not overstep the bounds of a determined but passive opposition; they will not be found erecting barricades and preaching revolution, as some of the Kulturkampf kettle-drummers were in 1848, but "Try ere you trust" will be the watchword in all their dealings with the Prussian government; and if we avow this distrust of those in power, and act thereupon, they have only themselves to blame. They sowed the seed. Whether Prussia has reason to be satisfied with the Kulturkampf so far as it has gone, we know not; but this we do know, and have shown, that the Catholics can afford to despise both the Kulturkampf and its authors.

V. We are not yet entirely through with our reflections. It may be said that, in our rosy view of the Kulturkampf, we never adverted to the desolation and the ruin it has caused—the scattered seminaries, the monasteries, convents, schools, hospitals, etc., etc., all closed; the number of churches and chapels shut up; the pious funds seized and perverted from the original intention; the orphaned dioceses; the parishes without pastors (to be now numbered by hundreds); the banished bishops and priests, and the numerous prosecutions, fines, and imprisonments. We know that

untold and innumerable evils are to be laid to the door of this Kulturkampf. We deplore them, and abhor with our whole soul the author of these grievous calamities.

It is certain that those who are responsible for these calamities will never elude divine chastisement. Let us only wait a while, and history will write their doom. No doubt God has permitted these trials and tribulations in our day for the same purposes that He often did before; nay, when we look deeper into the matter, we may, even now, discern in these sufferings but another evidence of God's paternal care. For what end were we created? To work and be occupied here on earth; to rest and rejoice in heaven. This is the great truth that sheds light on all the dark mysteries of God's providence. If children do not inherit a sufficiency from their parents or ancestors, it is plain that those children will be forced to labor for their own maintenance. But however holy parents or other relatives may have been, they cannot bequeath personal merit which was the reward of their own good works. Unlike worldly possessions, the kingdom of God is never handed over to any one, all ready to hand. That kingdom is to be obtained only by one's own labor. This being the case, it can never be affirmed with certainty that the destruction of those material results of the zeal and piety of a former generation is an unqualified evil. Let me exemplify. In former times endowments were established, at different periods, by pious individuals for the relief of the sick, the aged, the orphan, the widow, etc., etc. Now, had all these been suffered to remain intact, there would nowadays be no room for almsgiving. The wealthy monasteries and well-endowed churches would suffice to meet all needs. Were such a state of things to exist, it would eliminate from Christian souls their most lovable attribute—compassion for the poor and the afflicted. Were such a state of things to exist, what could we be called on to do for God, for our fellow-men? But the ordinance of the Creator is that we

work for the kingdom of heaven—work in some way for God. Now, when any one of these endowments is seized on and alienated, what is the result? Why, only that that form of human misery, whether the poor, the orphan, the aged, etc., which was depending on such endowment for relief, is now thrown all destitute on the hands of the faithful. These are stirred up anew to give and to labor for their suffering brethren; and thus a new field of charity is opened, and hundreds of hearts are moved, and thousands of good deeds performed, which else had no existence. Of course, such a view as this of the possible, but accidental, results of a crime, is not to be understood as extenuating in the least the guilt of the spoliator. It is only stated in confirmation of the position we have taken that, in permitting many seeming calamities, God's providence has in view the spiritual welfare of His children. In the beginning of this century a sweeping confiscation of Church property was made all through Europe. What ensued? simply this; that never, in the history of the Church, was there seen anything like the untiring activity and boundless generosity of Christian charity displayed ever since. And mark the main point. That activity and generosity begot in the people a spirit of faith and piety, and animated them with burning zeal for the glory of God and Holy Church. It was just such a quickening of Catholics into life as we now see going on in our Fatherland. As we are not called to rest and enjoyment here below, but to work and to difficulties, it is only natural that Providence should provide the work, and set plenty before us and our generation, all cut out, waiting to be done. And so it does. When the house is all finished and furnished, leaving nothing more to be done, God will permit some sacrilegious hand to overturn and undo all, so that the laborers may not forget the great duty of life—work. Nor should we let it a moment out of our minds that God may be more honored by the erection of a little country

chapel, paid for by the hard-earned pennies of the poor, than by the building of the noblest architectural pile, on which money is lavished out of a full treasury. Splendid edifices, of whatever kind, would of themselves never save a soul. They are only monuments to the piety of another generation. To have them remain, then, is comparatively of little import. But what is of import is this, that heads and hearts and hands be set to work for God. With Him it counts nothing what we effectuate. That we be heart and soul at work for Him is the point. These considerations may help us to comprehend many things beneath the sun, which otherwise would be incomprehensible, and to console us with the thought that Providence directs all for the good of the elect. This thought should be our load-star in the confusion arising out of this Kulturkampf, and prevent any wavering in the faith, any distrust or faint-heartedness. Let us take a lesson from the bees and the ants. You may break up the hive, trample the ant-hill, undo in a minute the labor of months. They won't pause a second to bewail, but fall to, at once, either to rebuild or repair.

Wonderful, indeed, are the means by which God thwarts the plans of those who aim at destroying His work, and very wonderful the means by which He makes the sins and sacrileges of the wicked inure to the spiritual advantage of His children.

VI. But if God's designs in our regard are to be fulfilled, and the graces intended for us from all eternity to be obtained, we must faithfully do our part. Unquestionably God intends that we should obtain many blessings through this Kulturkampf; we shall obtain them only when we endeavor to walk in the way of the Lord, make His thoughts our thoughts, His will our will. We must not sit down listless and despairing, or give over all efforts to help ourselves, neither must we waste time in useless lamenting and bewailing; but, as the difficulties of the situation wax greater, see to it, that our

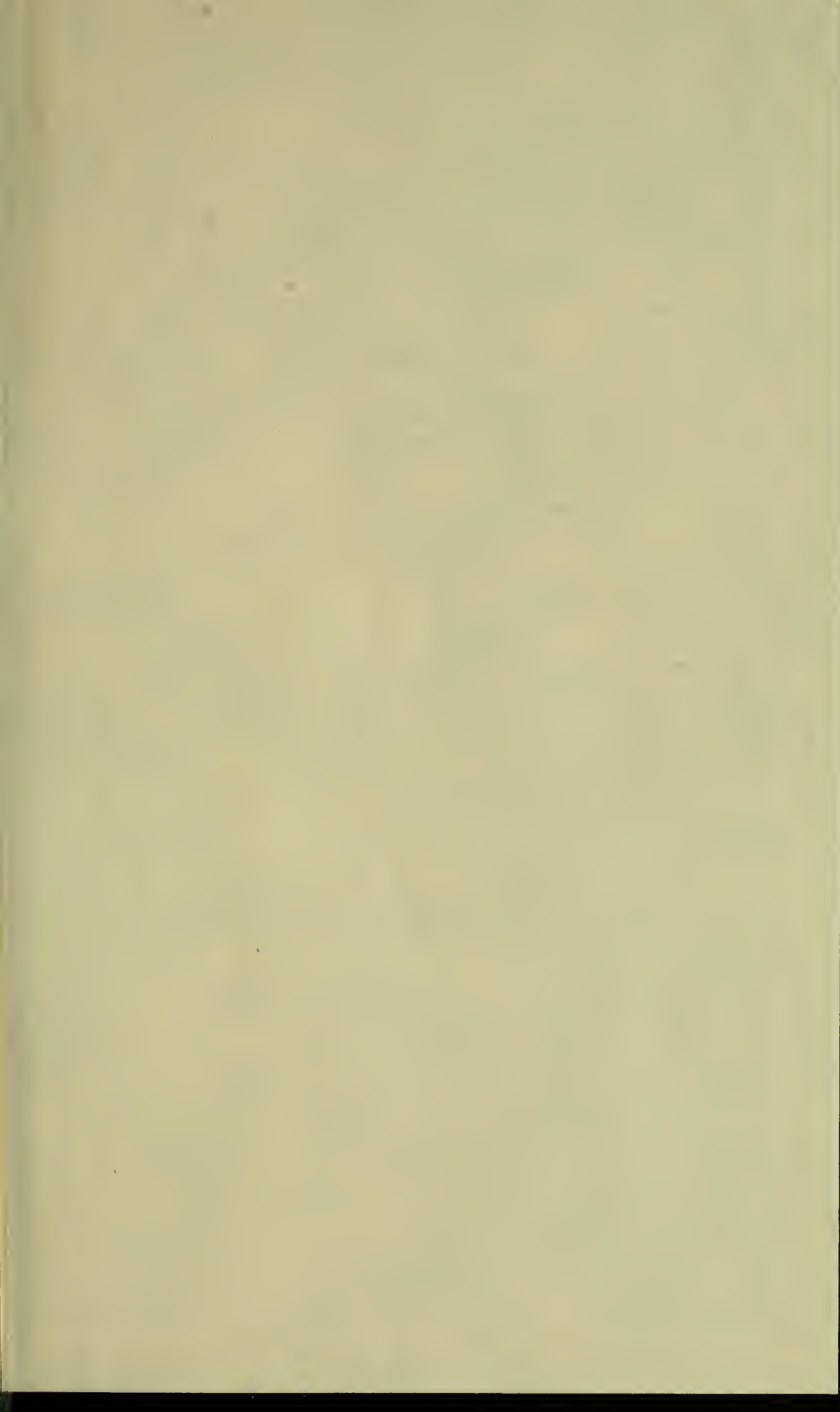
vigilance and our endeavors are increased in proportion. The more fierce the onset of the enemy, the bolder and more determined be our defence; the more desperate the assault, the more heroic be our resistance. The more tortuous we find the enemy's tactics, the greater the efforts made to deceive us, let us be only the more on our guard, and oppose to duplicity manly undeterred simplicity. We must be neither wheedled by sophistry, nor cowed by threats. Courage, patience, perseverance overcome all obstacles. If your protest be of no avail to-day, protest again to-morrow. If this election be against you, organize, and be better prepared for the next. If your children be no longer taught the Catechism in the schools, teach them yourself at home. If your boys and girls can no longer go to Sunday school and be brought under the influence of the Church in sodalities and the like, be all the more earnest in doing in the family all that is possible toward remedying the defect. When the faithful in those parishes deprived of a priest cannot go to church, let them have prayers in common at some house, or, at least, let each family have them at Mass-time. If they cannot hear the word of God, they can have pious reading at home. We must work, we must agitate, and, whatever way things go, never give up while there is anything that can yet be done. If we do so, the Kulturkampf will do more good than harm both to ourselves and the Church. Of this there can be no doubt.

VII. Many, even of those who succumbed to the first blast of the tempest, will recover from their weakness, and uplift their heads again, when they perceive its inherent powerlessness. The secret shame that in the day of trial and persecution they gave way, that they sacrificed their principles and their faith through cowardice, that they exhibited themselves to the world as hypocrites and time-servers, will assuredly be to many an anchor of salvation. They now realize what they are, and their ruinous conceit of themselves must be given up. A sense of their own misery will bring them to

humility, and will, later on, excite contrition in their breasts. Their past weakness will only stimulate their vigilance and zeal in the future. The tears of Peter flowed at the remembrance of his fall in the court-yard of the high priest, and the zeal of Paul was quickened by the recollection that he had persecuted the Church of God. Many a one of those who went down in the Kulturkampf will, at some future day come forth a hero in God's cause, and so wash away the stains of his treason.

For the rest, let us on all occasions invoke the aid of the Almighty, bow submissively to His holy will, and, under all trials, exclaim, with holy Job, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."









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